Sun Safety

SEVEN STEPS TO SAFER SUNNING

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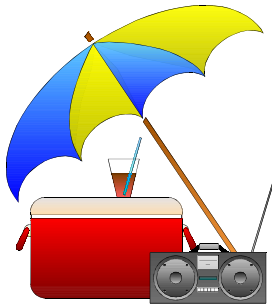
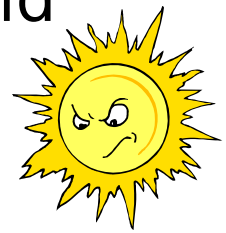
The following recommendations come from various expert organizations, including the American Academy of Dermatology, American Cancer Society, American Academy of Ophthalmology, Skin Cancer Foundation, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Cancer Institute, National Weather Service, and the FDA.



AVOID THE SUN

This is especially important between 10 AM and 3 PM, when the sun's rays are strongest. Also avoid the sun when the UV Index is high in your area.



The National Weather Service forecasts the UV Index daily in 58 US cities, based on local predicted conditions and covers about a 30-mile radius from each city. Check the local newspaper or TV and radio news broadcasts to learn the UV Index in your area. It also may be available through your local phone company.

National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center's home page at http://nic.fb4.noaa.gov/

USE SUNSCREEN PRODUCTS

With labels stating “sunscreen” or “sunblock,” these lotions, creams, ointments, gels, or wax sticks, when applied to the skin, absorb, reflect or scatter some or all of the sun’s rays.

Experts recommend broad-spectrum products with SPFs of at least 15. They also suggest applying the product liberally 15 to 30 minutes every time before going outdoors. It should be applied evenly on all exposed skin.

Sunscreens should not be used on babies younger than six months because their bodies may not be developed enough to handle sunscreen chemicals.

WEAR A HAT

A hat with at least a three inch brim is ideal because it can protect areas often exposed to the sun, such as neck, ears, eyes, and scalp..

WEAR SUNGLASSES

Sunglasses can help protect your eyes from sun damage. Large framed wrap around sunglasses are best because they can protect your eyes from all angles.

Children should wear sunglasses, too, starting as young as one year old.

COVER UP

Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, long-sleeved, shirts, pants, or long skirts as much as possible when in the sun. Tightly weaved cloth is best.

Avoid wearing wet clothes, such as a wet T-shirt, because when clothes get wet, the sun's rays can more easily pass through. If you can see light through a fabric, UV rays can get through, too.

AVOID ARTIFICIAL TANNING

A 1996 unpublished risk analysis by FDA scientists, concluded that people who use sun lamps about 100 times a year may be increasing their exposure to “melanoma-inducing” radiation by up to 24 times compared with the amount they would receive from the sun.

CHECK YOUR SKIN REGULARLY

The earlier you identify signs and see a doctor, the greater the chances for successful treatment.

Signs to look for are changes in size, texture, shape, and color of blemishes or a sore that does not heal.

If you find any changes, see your doctor. Also, during regular checkups, ask your doctor to check your skin.